

Submitted August 3, 2011

Approved As of

Date August 3, 2011

MINUTES OF THE ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING NO. 13-2011
Wednesday, June 8, 2011

The City of Rockville Planning Commission convened in regular session in the Mayor and Council Chambers at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 8, 2011.

PRESENT
John Tyner, Chair
Jerry Callistein
Kathleen Cook
Don Hadley
David Hill
Kate Ostell
Dion Trahan

Absent: None.

Present: Bridget Donnell Newton, Council Liaison
Andrew Gunning, Assistant Director of CPDS
Marcy Waxman, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Jim Wasilak, Chief of Planning
David Levy, Chief of Long-Range Planning
Jeremy Hurlbutt, Planner III
Cindy Kebba, Planner III
Mayra Bayonet, Planner III
Ann Wallas, Planner III
Craig Simoneau, Director of the Department of Public Works
Emad Elshafei, Chief of Traffic & Transportation
Peter Campanides, Civil Engineer II
Bobby Ray, Principal Planner
Tyler Tansing, Commission Secretary

WORKSESSION - Fourth worksession on the Draft Rockville Pike Plan

Discussion of transportation issues with MD Department of Transportation, Montgomery

Co. Department of Transportation, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Mr. Gunning thanked everyone for attending the worksession tonight.

Commissioner Tyner welcomed the representatives of Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

Mr. Levy reminded the audience that the public record remains open until September 30, 2011 and then introduced the representatives of the agencies participating in the worksession, and presented additional information regarding the topic of the worksession discussion.

Nkosi Yearwood, representing M-NCPPC, presented slides illustrating the background of Montgomery County's White Flint Sector Plan and its vision. Mr. Yearwood discussed the Plan's density and building heights; public amenities and facilities; public open space system; street network; impact taxes; financing; staging (3 phases); City of Rockville Draft Plan recommendations; and, the planning stages of the White Flint Sector Plan.

Don Halligan, representing MDOT explained that MDOT comprises the State Highway Administration (SHA), Maryland Aviation Administration; Maryland Transit Administration; Motor Vehicle Administration; and Maryland Port Administration.

Mr. Halligan stated that his agency will continue to work with the City, County and WMATA. He expressed the agency's concern about the Plan. Mr. Halligan stated that his department is underfunded due to the economic downturn, therefore, revenues are low, but, slowly rising, and they are trying to create other ways to raise revenue. Mr. Halligan further explained the State's funding situation regarding the planned construction of the White Flint area. He said that they hope to look at what Rockville is trying to do in the larger context of what is going on around it. He noted that they want the Pike to function and to do that, they need to know what would be involved.

Gary Erenrich, works for MCDOT and is liaison to WMATA. Mr. Erenrich stated that he is also the project manager on the Countywide Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) study and was a key person working on the new growth policy. Mr. Erenrich stated that he was very involved in the White Flint transportation and staging discussion. He believes from a County perspective, that the City is doing a good job in its vision. No decision has been made yet with regard to a vision for BRT. He noted that they will be giving a presentation on BRT to the Mayor and Council in the next few weeks. It is not likely they would put BRT on Rockville Pike's service roads. Mr. Erenrich said that bikes and buses in service roads do not mix very well due to safety issues involved. Mr. Erenrich further discussed BRT and service roads.

Nat Bottigheimer with WMATA spoke next. Mr. Bottigheimer provided an overview regarding operating bus service safely; reliability in making sure that people get to bus stops safely; bus trips;

and quality of service. Mr. Bottigheimer stated that their high profile issue in the last few years has been to work with the SHA planning departments around the region to elevate the priority given to buses on the roadways; increasing the average bus feed is one of the best ways to increase ridership and it is another way to effectively increase the size of their fleet at no additional cost; to provide the same amount of transit service today at less cost, and increase travel time savings. He said he would prefer to see a transit lane in another portion of the Pike. He also discussed operations; continuity of the street section along the length of the Pike is important to them, particularly when thinking about the types of buses to purchase that would run on the south portions of the Pike; the key thing is to think about the service plan and purpose of the transit-ways; concerns with a 13-foot bus lane shared with bikes; bike access to bus stations; and optimizing the capacity of the red line.

Mr. Erenrich noted that funding is the major concern.

Reena Matthews with MDOT agrees with the Pike Plan and feels it is very complimentary to what the White Flint Plan offers and they are very excited about it. Ms. Matthews stated that her department recently has been focused on how they can influence other multi-modal transit, pedestrian and bikes. They are developing a complete streets policy. Every area is different in the State and they need to consider modes differently in various sections of the State. Ms. Matthews stated that there must be coordination, flexibility and consistency in the planning of multi-mode transportation matters. Their issue is with service lanes; It is their policy not to maintain service lanes; preference is to have exclusive bike and bus lanes; how BRT should run along main lanes not service lanes. Ms. Matthews noted that due to the economy, some projects will have to be cut.

Commissioner Tyner stated that the Commission is having a special worksession on funding.

Thomas Autrey with M-NCPPC talked about the project development process and provided handouts to the Commission and representatives.

The Commission and agency representatives discussed ways of funding projects; and case studies.

Commissioner Hadley inquired about the relative health of RT 355 as it passes through Rockville and asked the views of the representatives.

Mr. Erenrich replied that it does have some failing points and explained.

The Commission and agency representatives continued discussion regarding existing traffic on the Pike and reducing traffic congestion. Funding, traffic capacity, bus service, quality of service, safety issues, accommodations for other users on the road, shared-use bike/pedestrian paths, buses versus rail fares; quality of life; preserving neighborhoods; BRT lanes were also discussed. All agreed that the worksession was very positive and the questions showed good thought on the Planning Commission's part.

RECOMMENDATION TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Annexation Petition ANX2011-00140, Silverwood/Shady Grove, LLC - to annex 4.37 acres at 15955 Frederick Road, to be placed in the Mixed-Use Transit District (MXTD) Zone.

Mr. Hurlbutt presented the staff report.

The Commission discussed the following:

1. Why does Montgomery County prohibit residential on the site?
2. Are there plans to remove the County Transfer Station?
3. Who would conduct a public hearing on this application?
4. What would be the school impact if this site were residential?
5. Why is staff recommending a new zoning classification for this site?
6. Could the Planning Commission recommend other zones for the property?
7. Who owns the forested area behind the site?

Pat Harris, Attorney, with Holland & Knight, representing the applicant, stated that a residential use next to a Metro station is appropriate for annexation. It provides the City with a somewhat unique position that it would be a jurisdiction having three metro stations within the City's jurisdiction also provides the City with the opportunity to determine what happens at a gateway to the City. Ms. Harris discussed the 2006 County Sector Plan, which did not recommend residential for this property. Ms. Harris provided some background information explaining why the property was not designated residential in the County Sector Plan. Ms. Harris pointed out that if one looks through the Plan, there is a great deal of language in the Plan that still suggests that residential is perfectly appropriate. She noted that the reason the Sector Plan recommended nonresidential for the site has nothing to do with the Shady Grove Transfer Station and everything to do with another developer wanting more residential. Now the reality is that the County was very focused on wanting to keep a total of 6,300 housing units in the Shady Grove area, this Plan is more than five years old and not one housing unit has been built. She said that she believes there is no concern on the part of the County that it will ever approach that 6,300 target, irrespective of whether this property ends up being developed as residential. Ms. Harris also noted that because of the Sector Plan recommendation that does say nonresidential, the County now has to make a recommendation to the City as to whether they think residential is appropriate. She stated that the site is 800 feet from the Metro Station and they are proposing 15% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs), plus, five percent workforce housing in which there is a true need for this kind of housing.

Questions from the Commission:

1. What is the reason that the applicant is seeking annexation into the City?
2. How long do MPDUs and Workforce housing remain before an owner can sell his/her unit at market price.
3. What are the standard parking requirements for the site?
4. Is there any intention for ground floor retail at this time?

Commission Discussion:

The Commission and staff discussed concerns regarding Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) impact; more appropriate zones for the site; and approval of the annexation by the County.

Ms. Harris further explained that the noise study showed no noise or odor issues.

Commissioner Hadley moved, seconded by Commissioner Trahan to recommend to the Mayor and Council approval of Annexation Petition ANX2011-00140, Silverwood/Shady Grove, LLC including the staff report. The motion passed on a vote of 5-2 with Commissioners Ostell and Hill opposing.

COMMISSION ITEMS

Staff Liaison Report

Mr. Gunning presented an update of the Commission's next meeting agenda on June 22.

Old Business

No Old Business.

New Business

Commissioner Hill stated that he was reappointed as member of the Planning Commission on Monday by the Mayor and Council.

Minutes

Commissioner Hill moved, seconded by Commissioner Callistein to approve the minutes of Meeting No. 11-2011 as submitted. The motion passed on a vote of 7-0.

FYI Correspondence

No FYI Correspondence.

ADJOURN

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tyler Tansing, Commission Secretary